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The Montana Legislative Process:

Instruction for Montana's Youth

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THE MONTANA LEGISLATIVE PROCESS:

INSTRUCTION FOR MONTANA'S YOUTH

The children of Helena's schools and the Montana Legislature invite the youth of Montana to become familiar with the legislative process and to visit the capital city. The Capitol City 89ers' Salute to Schools Committee prepared this pamphlet and the accompanying teacher materials as part of the Centennial Celebration. Publication and distribution were made possible by the efforts of Helena School District Number One, the Montana Education Association and the Helena Education Association.

Written by Jan Cladouhos with editing assistance from Rita Blouke, Sally Halverson, Legislative Council, and Jennifer Thompson, Montana Historical Society. Credit for basic concept goes to the Montana Advisory Council on Children and Youth.

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Salute to Schools Committee Members

Rita Blouke
Jan Cladouhos
Jane Dibert
Sally Halverson
Senator Joe Mazurek
Jennifer Thompson

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The Montana Capitol

Construction began on the Capitol in 1899, 10 years after Montana became the 41st state. Completed in 1902, it cost about $485,000 furnished. Faced with Montana sandstone, the Capitol was constructed in the Greek neoclassic style. The dome, covered with copper, rises 165 feet and is topped with a bronze statue of Lady Liberty. In 1912, two wings, faced with Montana granite, were added at a cost of $500,000. Just inside the front doors of the Capitol is a circular room called the Rotunda. Glued onto the interior surface of the dome are paintings that represent four types of heroic inhabitants in early Montana.

The Senate chambers can be found by ascending the grand stairway from the Rotunda. From the fourth floor, or gallery level, the visitor can look down into the Senate chamber, remodeled in the 1960s. The President of the Senate uses the chair at the head of the original mahogany rostrum and the Senate staff members are seated at the semi-circular desk below. The original paintings decorating the ceiling tell the story of early settlement in Montana.

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The House of Representatives is in the west wing of the 1912 addition to the Capitol. This chamber has the original marble columns, glass skylights, and oak rostrum and desks. The painting above the rostrum, "Lewis and Clark Meeting the Flathead Indians at Ross' Hole," is considered by many to be Charlie Russell's masterpiece.

In both chambers, the Democrats sit on the right and the Republicans sit on the left of the aisle. Votes register electronically on the large boards in front each chamber.

Outside the House of Representatives is a lobby decorated with six murals painted by Montana artist, Edgar S. Paxson. Most portray events in the history of Native American relations with the pioneers in Montana.

The Montana Legislature

The Senate is composed of 50 members, each elected for a four-year term from one of the 50 Senate districts in Montana. Half of the Senate membership is elected every two years.

The House of Representatives is composed of 100 members, each elected for a two-year term and each representing one of Montana's 100 House districts.

Since Montana has 56 counties, a county with a small population may share a Senate district with other counties. (Teton, Toole, Pondera, and Liberty Counties make up district 6.) Counties with large populations may have as many as 14 House districts. (Yellowstone County contains districts 83 and 85 through 98).

Sessions

Legislative sessions occur every odd-numbered year, beginning at noon on the first Monday in January. The length of a regular session is 90 legislative days. Sessions are occasionally extended if required to complete the work of the Legislature. In addition, under unusual circumstances, the Legislature may be called into Special Session by the Governor to deal with a specific problem.

Legislative Leadership

In both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the political party with the most members elected becomes the majority party of the chamber. Before each session begins, the Democratic and Republican legislative party members caucus to choose officers

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for the coming term. If neither party has a majority, the Governor's party becomes the majority party, choosing the President of the Senate or Speaker of the House.

Each chamber (the Senate and the House of Representatives) chooses a Majority Leader - an administrative official, who plans and controls the order of business to be considered by the respective house. Because sessions are limited to 90 days, choices made by the Majority Leader can be advantageous for his/her political party. Each house also elects a Majority Whip who helps the Majority Leader as needed and who makes sure the party members are present for important votes.

Both chambers also have a Minority Leader and a Minority Whip, chosen by the minority party caucus. They have the same duties as the majority leaders but have less power and influence because they represent fewer legislators.

Presiding Officers

Each legislative chamber has officers with many responsibilities such as interpreting rules, assigning bills to committees, and appointing members to special committees. Depending on their personal characteristics and the respect of their fellow legislators, they may be very influential and powerful.

In the Senate, the President presides over the proceedings. The President Pro Tempore serves in his absence. In the House of Representatives, the Speaker of the House and the Speaker Pro Tempore are the presiding officials. The majority caucuses of the respective chambers choose all four officers.

Senate Leadership	**House Leadership**
President of the Senate	Speaker of the House
President Pro Tempore	Speaker Pro Tempore
Majority Leader	Majority Leader
Majority Whip	Majority Whip
Minority Leader	Minority Leader
Minority Whip	Minority Whip

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THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

To the observer of a legislative business session, it may appear that the legislators aren't paying attention except when they vote. However, the majority of legislative work is done in the committees. Through their committee work, recommendations from other committees, or contact with the voting public and lobbyists, most legislators have already made their decisions before coming to the business session.

Every legislator is a member of at least two committees. Each committee has a chairperson of the majority party who presides over meetings and hearings. A vice chairperson is named who presides in the absence of the chairperson.

There are four basic types of committees:

1. **Standing Committees** are permanent groups that continue from one session to another. Such committees in the House include Appropriations, Education and Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, and Taxation. Similar standing committees in the Senate include Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Fish and Game, Highways and Transportation, and Rules. Each standing committee hears bills on specific subjects.

2. **Select Committees** are special or temporary groups created to act on particular bills. A recent example was the Select Committee on Economic Development.

3. **Joint Committees** are composed of members drawn from both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

4. **Conference Committees** are special committees generally composed of three members from a House Committee and three from the Senate. Usually with the sponsor of the bill as a member, these committees try to recommend amendments acceptable to both chambers. A regular Conference Committee is limited to considering the specific disputed amendments. A Free Conference Committee may consider any amendments or change the entire bill.

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The Committee Hearing

The committee to which a bill has been assigned calls a hearing for committee members and those members of the public who wish to attend. The committee room is set up with a long table around which the members of the committee sit. The chairperson, vice chairperson and the secretary are usually seated together at one end of the table. Chairs are provided around the sides of the room for use by witnesses and observers. On the table is a binder for each committee member containing information and copies of the bills under consideration.

Before the meeting is brought to order, those who wish to testify must sign in with the committee secretary and supply their names, whom they represent, in which bill(s) they are interested and whether they are "for' or "against" the bill(s).

The committee chairperson calls the meeting to order; the secretary calls the roll; and the official business begins. The bills to be discussed are usually taken in the order they are posted on the committee hearing-meeting schedule board. It is essential for

someone who testifies to be present at the beginning of the meeting in case the order is altered.

The sponsor introduces his/her bill with a summary of its contents and purposes and then may introduce the person who encouraged the proposal of the bill. First proponents (supporters) and then opponents of the bill offer their testimony. Testimony may be verbal, written (to hand out to committee members) or audio-visual. After all the testimony is heard, the sponsor may offer a rebuttal to the testimony of the opponents. The chairperson then allows committee members to ask questions of the sponsor and those who have testified.

When all the bills are heard or time runs out, the committee may adjourn until the next meeting or dissolve itself into executive session, when the committee conducts private business. During executive session, the committee members have a more informal discussion of the bills, can take final action, and do whatever is needed to keep the committee and its responsibilities in order. Though members of the public may attend executive session, they may not speak or participate. During executive session, the committee can decide to:

1. give the bill a "Do Pass" or a "Do Not Pass" recommendation, thus passing it out of committee so that it may be considered by the entire Legislature during a business session (Committee of the Whole) on second reading;

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2. amend the bill, then follow steps of number 1;

3. postpone any action until a later date;

4. call for further study, perhaps setting up a subcommittee for this task; or

5. recommend a substitute bill.

If the committee report is favorable, the bill is reproduced on yellow paper, with any amendments, and placed on the calendar to await further consideration.

The Chairperson

The committee chairperson has important responsibilities in the Legislative process. He/she can set the order of the bills to be discussed, the date on which they will be considered, how much time will be allowed for testimony, the order of the witnesses, and so on.

Proponents and Opponents

Presenting testimony brings facts directly to legislators. It helps the legislative process by providing information that legislators may not have time to research on their own.

Anyone can testify. To be effective, testimony should be brief and concise and not repetitive. Written testimony can be mailed to the committee. Witnesses who wish to show films, slides, or take committee members on field trips must make arrangements with the chairperson in advance.

How a Bill Becomes Law

Introduction of a Bill

Except for an appropriation bill, which must begin in the House, a bill can be introduced in either the House or the Senate. The idea for a bill may come as the result of letters and calls to a particular legislator. Or, an organization may meet with a legislator and ask that he/she sponsor a particular piece of legislation. The legislator may have promised his/her constituents that he/she would try to get certain bills passed if elected. Wherever the idea originates, the proposed bill is sent to the Montana Legislative Council where it is formally drafted. It is approved and signed by the sponsor and then filed with the

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Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate.

First Reading of a Bill

The Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, depending on the sponsor's chamber, assigns a number to the bill and reads the number, author, and title of the bill on the floor. If it originates in the House of Representatives, it will have a House Bill (HB) number. From the Senate, the code is SB.

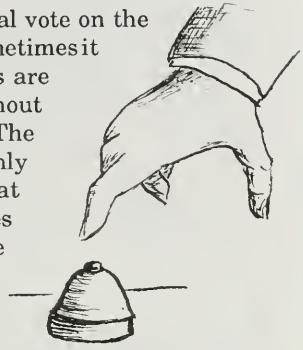
Committee Assignment

The Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate assigns the bill to the appropriate committee. Copies of the bill on white paper are made available to the legislative members and the public. When the bill comes out of committee with a recommendation, ready for the second reading, it is printed on yellow paper.

Second Reading and Voting

The bill is now considered by the entire chamber acting as the "Committee of the Whole." During this time, the Speaker of the House or President of the Senate appoints a legislator to act as chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, presiding over debate on the floor.

Members may propose amendments, each of which is voted upon. All amendments to a bill must be voted on before the final vote on the bill. This explains why sometimes it seems that the legislators are voting on the same bill without passing or rejecting it. The final vote will include only those amendments that received a majority of votes and will become part of the bill. Approval or adoption of the committee report prepares the bill for final passage. Rejection of a favorable committee report means killing the bill. Another way to kill the bill is "indefinite postponement."



The bill number, for example HB 234, is lighted above the voting machine in the front of the chamber. If the bill number is followed by an "A," this means that the vote is on an amendment to the bill (HB 234 A). A green light on the voting machine means an "aye" or yes vote, and a red light means "no."

Engrossment

If passed in the second reading, the bill is rechecked for errors, put in final form with all amendments and printed on blue paper.

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Third Reading

When the bill is voted upon in this final version, no amendments may be considered. Legislators press the green or red buttons on their desks for a simple "yes" or "no" vote, which is recorded from each member.

Sending to the Other Chamber

After final passage of a bill in the first chamber, it is sent to the second chamber, where the process is repeated with another first reading, committee hearing, and second reading. On third reading any amendments are engrossed and the bill is printed on salmon-colored paper. If the bill began in the Senate and is passed, it goes through these steps again in the House. If the bill receives an unfavorable recommendation, it may be referred to a committee for further study or may receive no more consideration.

Enrollment

If the bill passes both chambers in identical form, it is enrolled (reproduced in final form on ivory paper), signed by the presiding officers of both chambers

and sent to the Governor. If the bill passes the Senate in different form and the House accepts the changes, the bill is enrolled, signed by the presiding officers, and sent to the Governor. If the House rejects the changes, the bill may be sent to a Conference Committee or a Free Conference Committee (composed of members of both houses) which tries to reach a compromise. If either committee can reach no agreement, the bill may die. If both houses accept the committee's compromises, the bill is enrolled, signed by the presiding officers and sent to the Governor.

The Governor's Role

During the legislative session, a bill becomes a law if signed by the Governor within five days after it has reached his office. The bill also becomes a law if the Governor does not act on it within five days after its delivery to him while the Legislature is in session or within 25 days if the Legislature has adjourned. The 1972 Montana Constitution eliminated the Governor's previous power to kill a bill by just ignoring it, called the "pocket veto."

If the Governor vetoes the bill, he returns it to the Legislature with his reasons for the action. He can also return the bill with recommendations for amendments. The Legislature can let the bill die; it can vote to adopt the Governor's amendments; or it

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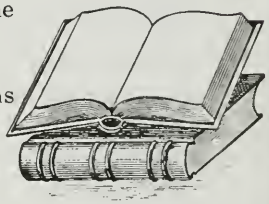
can vote to "override" the Governor's veto. Two-thirds of the members of each chamber must vote to override the veto for the bill to become law.

If after the Legislature has adjourned, the Governor vetoes a bill which has received broad support, the Secretary of State polls the members of each chamber. If two-thirds of the members of each chamber vote to override, the bill becomes a law.



The Governor may also veto items in appropriation bills.

LAW

New bills approved by both the Legislature and the Governor can become laws at different times. Some bills have clauses that make them laws immediately and others contain clauses that implement the laws in later years. Most appropriation bills are implemented at the beginning of the next fiscal year, always the first of July of the year in which the Legislature has met in regular session. If no effective date is specified, other bills become effective October 1 of the legislative year.

The complete texts of every bill and resolution that have been passed are published in a hard-cover book entitled Laws of Montana, followed by the year. The set is popularly called the "Session Laws." Each bill

is a chapter number, with Chapter 1 being the first bill passed and signed.

Montana Code Annotated is the systematic arrangement of all permanent state statutes (laws) currently in force in Montana. A new edition is printed every odd-numbered year with new laws added, repealed laws deleted, and amended statutes updated. The codification makes it easier to find a law. The Codes consist of 99 titles in 13 volumes. Title 20, for example, deals with all the laws about education.

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COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

Letter Writing

Letters are an excellent and inexpensive way to let your legislator know your feelings and opinions about specific issues. Be sure to put the message in your own words. Form letters or petitions do not have the impact of personal, informed opinions. Legislators want to know how the people feel about issues.

Some important points to remember are:

The Proper Address
On the envelope:

Senator ——— (or Representative ———)
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

For the inside address:

The Honorable ————
Senate Chambers (or House of Representatives)
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

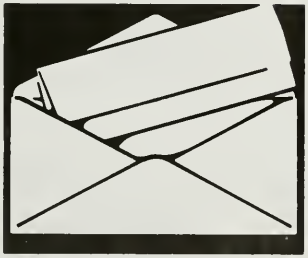
For the salutation:

Dear Senator ————:
Dear Representative ————:

Whom to Write:

1. The chief sponsor of the bill
2. The committee chairperson and the members of the committee
3. Your own area legislators

When to Write:



1. Write committee members and sponsors before the committee hearing on the bill takes place.
2. Write your own legislator before the bill reaches the floor on the second reading, when most debate occurs.

Usually if a bill passes second reading, it will pass third reading.

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What to Write:

1. Identify the bill by number and title and discuss only that bill.
2. Give the chief sponsor's name and a summary of the bill.
3. Explain your position on the bill, stating briefly your reasons for asking his/her support or opposition.
4. Give the sources of the information you have used.
5. Ask for his/her consideration of your views.
6. Include your name, position or situation (student at which school), and return address.

Telephoning

You can call the legislative operator and ask to speak to your representative. If he/she is not able to come to the phone, leave a message that will be delivered to his/her desk by a page.

Lobbying

Lobbying is an important part of the legislative process. It is a method by which people with special concerns, needs, views and opinions try to persuade legislators to support or oppose policies and legislation.

Lobbying is a legitimate function. The lobbyist can provide information that the individual legislator rarely has time to research on his/her own.

In Montana any citizen 18 years or older has the right to lobby professionally. First, he or she should study the lobbyist registration and licensing laws. An application for a license to lobby can be obtained from the Commissioner of Political Practices. A license is issued upon acceptance of the application and the payment of a fee.

However, any citizen, regardless of age, may testify, write, or phone his/her legislator.

AT THE CAPITOL

The Senate and House of Representatives chambers are located on the third floor of the Capitol and are connected by a lobby with a blackboard at one end and a bulletin board at the other. These boards are used to post committee hearing schedules. The times and locations of hearings and meetings are

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listed under the appropriate committee headings, with a list of the bills to be considered.

Daily Agendas from the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House list which bills will be considered by each chamber during the day's general session. Limited numbers of copies are available at the Information Booth in the Rotunda. The electronic billboards located inside the two chambers also list the daily calendar and are easily viewed from the gallery areas on the fourth floor. This information is also available on the computer system.

A Committee Hearing Schedule, available from the Legislative Information Booth in the Rotunda, lists the bills on which testimony will be heard each day, with the place and time of the hearing.

Copies of bills can be purchased for a small fee in the basement of the Capitol at the Mail Room. It is also helpful to buy from the Mail Room copies of daily "Status Sheets" for both chambers. Status Sheets list all the bills introduced with a concise summary and their status for that day (whether they are in committee, on second reading, being engrossed, etc.).

You have free access to the balcony seating areas, the galleries, located on the fourth floor, from which to observe the business proceedings and

other activities of both chambers. Eating and drinking are prohibited in the galleries.

Seating charts of both chambers are available from the Information Booth located in the Rotunda or by request from the Sergeant-at-Arms offices near the two chambers. If you arrive before the legislative business begins, you are free to enter the two chambers. By using the seating chart, you can locate your individual representative or senator. If someone is guarding the chamber entrances, permission must be granted before entering.

Before the chambers convene for the day's business, a sign is posted at the entrances stating, "Two-Hour Rule in Effect." This means that no one is allowed onto the chamber floors except legislators and authorized persons. This rule is to allow legislators some time before convening to organize and prepare for the business session.

If you wish to see your legislator while the chambers are in session, write a note including your name and hometown and briefly state your reason for seeing the legislator. Go to the Sergeant-at-Arms Office and ask for a page to deliver your note.

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Vocabulary

Amendment: A proposed change, addition, or deletion to a bill.

Appropriation: An authorization to spend state or federal funds. Appropriating money is done by passing bills that authorize agencies to spend money for certain purposes. Such bills must originate in the House of Representatives.

Bill: A proposed law or amendment, addition, or repeal of an existing statute introduced in the Legislature.

Caucus: A group of legislators with a common interest. Although usually a Democratic Caucus or a Republican Caucus, the term can be used to describe any group of legislators, such as an Indian Caucus. As a verb, the term "to caucus" means to have a meeting.

Committee of the whole: A parliamentary procedure in which the entire body of a chamber becomes a committee for the purpose of working on a bill.

Conference committee: A committee consisting of three members from each chamber appointed to resolve differences in a bill that has

been passed in different versions by each chamber.

Constituent: A resident of a legislator's district.

Daily agenda: A list of bills to be considered by each chamber during the day's business.

District: A political-geographical division of the state from which a Senator or Representative is elected. There are 50 Senate Districts and 100 House Districts.

Engrossment: Putting the bill in final form, including all amendments, for the third reading in the House or Senate.

Enrollment: Reproducing the bill in final form after the third reading, in preparation for signatures.

Galleries: Balcony areas above legislative chambers for public viewing of the proceedings.

Joint committees: Groups with members from both houses.

Lobbyist: A person, usually acting as an agent for an organized group, who seeks to bring about the passage or defeat of legislative bills or to influence their content.

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Page: A youth employed to run errands, carry messages, or act as a guide in a legislative body.

Presiding officers: Members of the House or Senate who control the proceedings. In the Senate, the President rules, and in the House of Representatives, the Speaker of the House presides.

Sergeant at arms: An officer appointed to keep order within a legislative body.

Select committees: Special or temporary groups who investigate legislation.

Standing committees: Permanent groups that continue from one session to another.

Status Sheets: Lists of all the bills introduced with a concise summary and the status for that day (in committee, second reading, etc.)

Testify: To present evidence for or against a bill at a committee hearing.

Veto: The constitutional right of the chief executive to reject a bill passed by the legislative body.

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Teacher Packet

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TEACHER INFORMATION

This educational unit should be helpful for instructing the students of Montana about the State Capitol and the legislative process. The pamphlet is directed toward middle school level. High school teachers may wish to include a more detailed explanation of the process. Elementary teachers will need to provide more instructional support and concentrate primarily on the general concepts.

Several of the questions and activities are designed to develop critical thinking skills and are not intended to influence the political tendencies of students. Discussion is encouraged which accepts a variety of opinions and viewpoints.

Permission is granted to copy these materials as needed for educational purposes in Montana schools, public or private.

Quiz #1 covers sections entitled THE MONTANA CAPITOL, THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE, SESSIONS, and LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP.

Quiz #2 covers THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM.

Quiz #3 covers HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW.

Quiz #4 covers COMMUNICATION WITH LEGISLATORS and AT THE CAPITOL.

The Test covers all information included in the pamphlet, including VOCABULARY, and provides several essay questions which can be used as part of the test or as long-term assignments.

The Salute to Schools program consists of four components, one of which is this educational unit. You and your students are encouraged to participate in the other three:

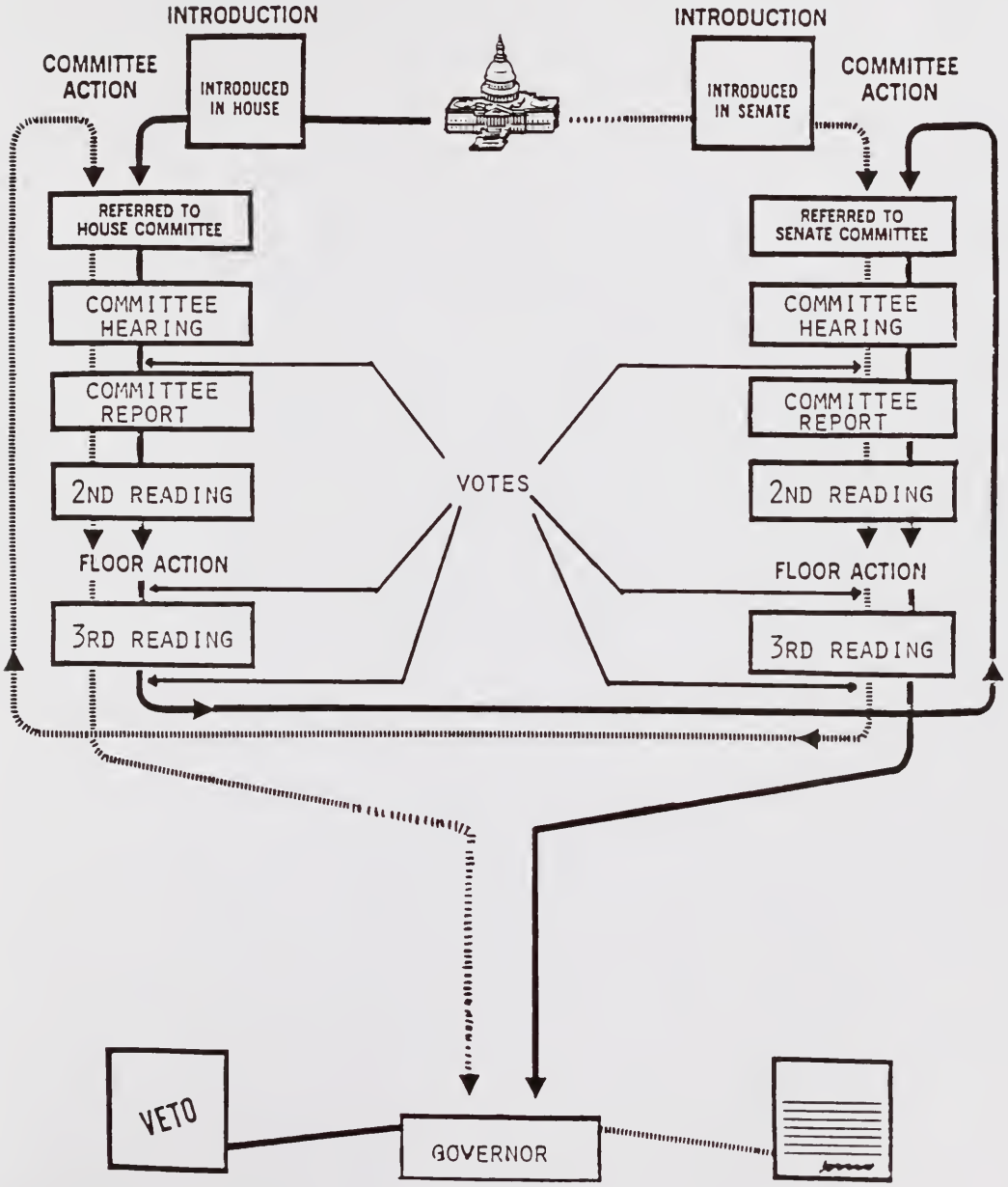
1. Attend the Legislature on the day your county will be recognized. School recognition day schedules are available at the Legislative Council, Historical Society, and Salute to Schools news releases.

2. Submit a one-page project dealing with the history of your area or school for a Montana Sampler, which will contain stories, poems, pictures, interviews, biographies, essays, or any other medium that can be contained in the 8 1/2 by 11 albums.

3. Tour the Capitol, Montana Historical Society Museum, or other Helena attractions and receive a souvenir of the centennial year.

Be sure to call the Montana Historical Society (444-4794) to arrange tours and visit the Legislature.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



QUIZ #1 30 points Name_____

1. How many Senators? How long are their terms? (2 pts)

2. How many Representatives? How long are their terms? (2)

3. When and with what material was the Capitol built? (4)

4. Which chamber remains as it was originally built? (1)

5. Do the legislators know how others voted? Explain. (2)

6. What kinds of paintings will you see throughout the Capitol? (2)

7. What four Montana heroic inhabitants would you choose to have painted in the Rotunda? (4)

8. When does the Montana Legislature meet? (2)

9. What is a majority party? (1) What are four advantages of becoming the majority party? (4)

10. List the Senate and House leadership titles. (6) For extra credit, can you list the names of the leaders for this session?

QUIZ #2 25 points Name_____

1. Why is the committee system important? (2)

2. Name the four types of committees and give a brief explanation of what they do. (8)

3. What does a bill's sponsor do in a committee meeting? (3)

4. What helpful hints could you give to someone who wanted to testify for or against a bill? (4)

5. Why is the committee chairperson important? (3)

6. What actions can a committee take concerning a bill? (5)

QUIZ #3 25 points Name_____

1. Where are appropriation bills introduced? Where are non-appropriation bills introduced? (2 pts)

2. What does HB 38 mean? SB 88? How did they get these numbers? (3)

3. How can the ideas of citizens influence legislators to introduce certain bills? (3)

4. What do you think is the purpose of printing bills on different colors for different readings? (2)

5. What happens if the Governor doesn't sign a bill that comes to him? What would have happened in 1965? (2)

6. If you want to find the exact words in a particular law, where can you look? (1)

7. On your own paper, write an imaginary bill, such as "SB 34: A law making it unlawful to serve soft drinks in school cafeterias." Describe the steps that the bill would go through to become a law, or, if you wish, to fail to become a law. (12)

QUIZ # 4 20 points Name_____

1. Why might personal letters to legislators be better than form letters? (2 pts)

2. What title should come before the name of a Senator or Representative in your inside address? (1)

3. Why do you think it is important to tell the sources of your information in a letter to your legislator? (2)

4. If you had a choice, would you prefer writing or telephoning your legislator? Why? (4)

5. When are the best times to write legislators or sponsors concerning the bills you want to influence? (2)

6. Explain why lobbying can be helpful to legislators and law-making in general. (2)

7. Where are the Senate and House Chambers? (1)

8. Where are the galleries? (1)

9. List five sources of information about bills available in the Capitol. (5)

Additional Activities

1. Play a game of "Legislate," assigning students parts and asking them to introduce bills, debate them, and vote on them. Divide the class into committees of four to six students each, allow the Speaker to assign a bill to each committee and conduct hearings. Testimony could be requested from people outside the class. Go through the process of How a Bill Becomes a Law. Teacher could be the Governor.

2. Have students write letters to their legislators.

3. By studying newspapers, have students keep track of certain bills. Let each student pick a bill he or she will track.

4. Write biographies of legislators from your district or throughout the state.

5. Study biographies of historical figures represented in the Capitol, and assign each student to say something about each person when you see his/her statue, painting, etc. on your trip.

TEST: THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE Name_____

Multiple Choice

____1. The Montana Senate is composed of a) 25 b) 50 c) 75 d) 100 members.

____2. The Montana House of Representatives is composed of a) 25 b) 50 c) 75 d) 100 members.

____3. Construction began on the Montana Capitol in a) 1855 b) 1899 c) 1915 d) 1958.

____4. The subject of most paintings in the Montana Capitol is a) history b) landscape c) still life d) varied.

____5. The Montana Legislature meets every a) six months b) year c) two years d) three years.

____6. The official who controls the order of business in each chamber is the a) Majority Whip b) Majority Leader c) President or Speaker d) Governor.

____7. The majority of legislative work is done in a) business sessions of the House or Senate b) committees c) the Supreme Court d) the Governor's Office.

____8. Committees that try to resolve differences in bills from the Senate and the House are called a) standing b) select c) joint d) conference committees.

____9. Informal time committees use to discuss bills without public input is called a) conferencing b) secret session c) business meeting d) executive session.

____10. The committee chairperson is important because a) he assigns bills to his committee b) he can decide if the public can testify c) he can set the order of the bills to be discussed d) all of these.

____11. The entire chamber acts as a "Committee of the Whole" during the a) first reading b) second reading c) third reading d) engrossment.

____12. In order to override the Governor's veto, the Legislature must pass a motion to override by a) simple majority vote b) two-thirds majority vote c) three-fourths majority vote.

____13. Most non-appropriation bills that become law are implemented a) immediately b) on October 1 of the legislative year c) a few years after being passed d) the following January.

____14. The systematic arrangement of all permanent state statutes is in a) Laws of Montana b) Status Sheets c) Daily Calendar d) Montana Code Annotated.

____15. The proper form of address for a Senator or Representative is a) The Honorable b) Mr. or Ms. c) Your Grace d) The Venerable.

____16. Lobbying a) is a legitimate function b) generally requires a license c) provides additional information to legislators d) all of these.

____17. The Senate and House Chambers are located on the Capitol's a) first b) second c) third d) fourth floor.

____18. You can watch the proceedings of the Legislature from the a) galleries b) chambers c) closed-circuit televisions d) Rotunda.

____19. The high school students who carry messages to the legislators are called a) sergeants b) gophers c) pages d) cubs.

____20. If the sign "Two-Hour Rule in Effect" is posted at the chamber entrance, it means that a) the public is not allowed in b) business starts in two hours c) the legislators can chat with constituents d) lobbyists are working in the chambers.

True or False

____21. The Senate completely changes membership every four years.

____22. Each of Montana's counties is a legislative district.

____23. The Senate chamber was remodeled in the 1960s.

____24. The House of Representatives is in an addition to the Capitol.

____25. When a bill is voted upon during third reading, no amendments may be considered.

____26. The length of a regular legislative session is 90 legislative days.

____27. Every legislator is a member of at least four committees.

____28. Standing committees are committees that are so large that the members cannot sit down at the tables provided.

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____38. A bill must be signed by the Governor to become a law.

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____40. The information desk in the Rotunda has seating charts of both chambers and committee hearing schedules.

Fill in the Blanks

41. A proposed change, addition, or deletion to a bill is called a/an _____.

42. A group of legislators with a common interest is a/an _____.

43. After second reading, putting the bill in final form, with all amendments, is called_____.

44. After passing both houses, reproducing the bill in final form is called_____.

45. To present evidence for or against a bill at a hearing is to _____.

46. The method by which people or groups with special concerns, needs, or opinions try to persuade legislators to support their policies is called _____.

47. Two sources you can check to see which bills will be considered by each chamber during the day's business are

_____

48. and _____.

49. Copies of bills and "Status Sheets" can be purchased in the Capitol's _____.

50. The figure on the top of the Capitol Dome is called

_____.

Essay Questions

1. Describe the Capitol, its history, its decor, what impresses you about it, the statues and paintings, its floor plan, or any aspects that you would like to report.

2. Trace the steps that a bill takes in becoming law.

3. Describe the legislative leadership, including how each leader is chosen and what he or she is expected to do.

4. Explain the reason for the committee system and why it is important.

5. Explain how the Governor fits into the legislative process.

6. Explain how to write a letter to a legislator, including some helpful hints about what to say and when to write.

7. Explain lobbying and give your opinions about why it is good or bad, or both.

8. If you were going to the Legislature (again), what would you do to get the most out of your visit?

9. If you were a legislator, what job would you like to have (Majority Leader, committee chairperson, etc.); why would you be well-suited; and what would you want to accomplish?

10. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of our legislative system in Montana?

QUIZ #1 30 points Key

1. How many Senators? How long are their terms? (2 pts)
   50 *4 years*

2. How many Representatives? How long are their terms? (2)
   100 *2 years*

3. When and with what material was the Capitol built? (4)
   It was built from 1899-1902 of Montana sandstone and was added to in 1912, using granite. (extra: dome is copper)

4. Which chamber remains as originally built and furnished? (1)
   The House of Representatives has not been remodeled.

5. Do the legislators know how others voted? Explain. (2)
   Yes, they can look at the electronic boards in the front of each chamber to see how everyone voted.

6. What kinds of paintings will you see throughout the Capitol? (2)
   The paintings are of historical characters or events and decorate the walls and ceilings. Many are the works of famous Montana artists like Russell and Paxson.

7. What four Montana heroic inhabitants would you choose to have painted in the Rotunda? (4)
   In reality, the paintings are of a prospector, trapper, Indian, and cowboy. Students may choose farmer, lumberjack, pioneer woman, missionary, or any type they feel important. This question should lead to discussion.

8. When does the Montana Legislature meet? (2)
   It meets every two years, on the odd-numbered years.

9. What is a majority party? (1) What are four advantages of becoming the majority party? (4)
   The majority party has the most members elected. It chooses the Majority Leaders who control the order of business, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. Not only does it have leadership power, but voting power as well.

10. List the Senate and House leadership titles. (6) For extra credit, can you list the names of these people for this session?
    President & Pres. Pro Tempore of Senate *1/2 pt each*
    Speaker & Speaker Pro Tempore of House
    Majority Leaders of House & Senate
    Minority Leaders of House & Senate
    Majority Whips of House & Senate
    Minority Whips of House & Senate
    (Those leaders are chosen in November. Check newspaper.)

QUIZ #2 25 points Key

1. Why is the committee system important? (2)
   The majority of legislative work is done here. It allows some legislators to study some bills carefully and make recommendations to others.

2. Name the four types of committees and give a brief explanation of what they do. (8)
   Standing Committees are permanent and deal with specific topics. Select Committees are temporary and formed to study particular bills. Joint Committees are formed with members from both chambers and assigned to particular legislation. Conference committees, with three House and three Senate members, try to recommend amendments acceptable to both chambers (with a Free Conference Committee perhaps reworking the entire bill to achieve a compromise between chambers.)

3. What does a bill's sponsor do in a committee meeting? (3)
   The sponsor introduces and summarizes the bill; introduces the person responsible for the bill; and responds to testimony against the bill, trying to get a "do pass."

4. What helpful hints could you give to someone who wanted to testify for or against a bill? (4)
   Be brief, concise, and avoid repetition. Be present at the beginning of the meeting in case the order of witnesses has been changed. Sign in with the secretary. Use audio-visual aids if helpful. Make prior arrangements if planning a field trip for members.

5. Why is the committee chairperson important? (3)
   The chairperson sets the order of bills, the date they will be discussed, how much time will be allowed for testimony, and the order of the witnesses. These can be important factors.

6. What actions can a committee take concerning a bill? (5)
   The committee can recommend a "Do" or "Do Not Pass." They can amend the bill, then make recommendation to legislature. They can postpone action, call for further study, perhaps setting up a subcommittee, or recommend a substitute bill.

QUIZ #3 25 points *Key*

1. Where are appropriation bills introduced? Where are non-appropriation bills introduced? (2 pts)
   Appropriation bills are introduced in the House.
   Other bills can be introduced in either the House or Senate.

2. What does HB 38 mean? SB 88? How did they get these numbers? (3)
   House Bill (number) 38 Senate Bill 88
   The Chief Clerk assigns the number.

3. How can the ideas of citizens influence legislators to introduce certain bills? (3)
   Citizens can write letters or call the legislators.
   Citizens can belong to organizations that support certain types of legislation (like a wilderness group).
   Citizens can vote for candidates who promise to introduce bills they would like to see become law.
   Citizens can testify at committee hearings.

4. What do you think is the purpose of printing bills on different colors for different readings? (2)
   Legislators, reporters, and citizens can easily tell if the bill is in first, second, or third reading, etc. They could see if they have the latest copy.

5. What happens if the Governor doesn't sign a bill that comes to him? What would have happened in 1965? (2)
   The bill becomes law if he doesn't act on it within five days. Before 1965, the bill would have been "pocket vetoed."

6. If you want to find the exact words in a particular law, where can you look? (1)
   You could look in Laws of Montana, commonly called "Session Laws," or later, after they've been arranged systematically, in Montana Code Annotated.

7. On your own paper, write an imaginary bill, such as "SB 34: A law making it unlawful to serve soft drinks in school cafeterias." Describe the steps that the bill would go through to become a law, or, if you wish, to fail to become a law. (12)
   Briefly, the steps are introduction, assignment of number, drafting, first reading, committee hearing, second reading, engrossment, third reading, sending to other chamber and repetition of steps, enrollment, governor's signature, written as law. Students should elaborate.

QUIZ # 4 20 points *Key*

1. Why might personal letters to legislators be better than form letters? (2 pts)
   They may indicate that more effort was made, and therefore the citizen is truly concerned. They express personal, rather than group sentiments. On the other hand, some students could argue that form letters received in large numbers may be very influential, as they would be clearly written and represent a large block of voters.

2. What title should come before the name of a Senator or Representative in your inside address? (1)
   The Honorable

3. Why is it important to give your sources of information in a letter to your legislator? (2)
   The legislator would know how reliable the information is and perhaps go to that source for further facts. This question requires that students think out a possible reason, as the answer is not in the text.

4. If you had a choice, would you prefer writing or telephoning your legislator? Why? (4)
   Answers will vary.

5. When are the best times to write legislators or sponsors concerning the bills you want to influence? (2)
   Letters should be written to the sponsor before the committee hearing is held. Letters to legislators should be sent before the bill comes up on second reading.

6. Explain why lobbying can be helpful to legislators and law-making in general. (2)
   Lobbying can bring information to legislators. Lobbyists may be able to project the consequences of certain legislation that lawmakers may not have foreseen.

7. Where are the Senate and House Chambers? (1)
   On the third floor of the Capitol.

8. Where are the galleries? (1)
   On the fourth floor of the Capitol (balconies).

9. List five sources of information about bills available in the Capitol. (5)
   Blackboards and bulletin boards in the lobby, the Daily Agendas, the electronic billboards, the committee hearing schedules, the Status Sheets.

Teacher's Essay Guide

Depending upon the number of points you wish to include on the test, some of these essay questions could be added for work during class time or as a take-home section. Two or three questions could be added to make the test worth 100. Choosing at least one question from 1-6 and also one from 7-10 is recommended to allow a mix of objective and subjective writing. Values assigned to each question are flexible.

1. Describe the Capitol, its history, its decor, what impresses you about it, the statues and paintings, its floor plan, or any aspects that you would like to report.

   For students who have visited the Capitol, this answer could be varied and lengthy. For those who have not, judge answers by the description in the booklets and any pictures you have shown them in class. (May be assigned 10-25 pts.)

2. Trace the steps that a bill takes in becoming a law.

   Steps should include Introduction, First Reading and assignment of a number, Committee Assignment, Committee Hearing, Second Reading and voting, perhaps amendments, Engrossment, Third Reading, Sending to Other Chamber, Enrollment and signatures, Implementation. (At least 10 points, with explanations, probably 25)

3. Describe the legislative leadership, including how each leader is chosen and what he/she is expected to do.

   Answer should include: President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, chosen by the majority party caucus to preside over the respective houses. President Pro Tempore and Speaker Pro Tempore, also chosen by majority caucus, to serve in their absences. Majority Leaders for each house chosen by majority caucuses plan and control the order of business. Majority Whips help the leaders as needed and make sure party members vote. Chosen by the minority party, Minority Leaders and Whips have similar functions but less power. (Giving a point for each leader, four points for method of choice, and four for duties--20 points.)

4. Explain the reason for the committee system and why it is important.

   Since all legislators don't have time to study all the bills in depth, the committee system allows some of them to study, hear testimony, discuss, and make recommendations to the whole on a few bills. It is important because much of the legislative work is done in committee and the committee pretty well determines the fate of a bill. (7 points)

5. Explain how the Governor fits into the legislative process.

   The Governor can veto a bill, which requires 2/3 vote to override. By explaining his reasons for veto, he may influence legislators to amend. He can veto items in appropriation bills. (3 points)

6. Explain how to write a letter to a legislator, including some helpful hints about what to say and when to write.

   See the section on letter-writing. (Up to a possible 15 points)

7. Explain lobbying and give your opinions about why it is good or bad, or both.

   Lobbying is an organized effort by groups or individuals to influence legislation. Lobbyists must be licensed. Some students may find it helpful because it brings facts to the attention of legislators and because organizations whose interests are important need a means of communicating their needs to government. Students may be offended by possible bribery, not only in the form of money (illegal), but in favors, dinners, drinks, etc. They could also point out that those interests who cannot afford to hire lobbyists are left out of this process.
   (5-15 points)

8. If you were going to the Legislature (again), what would you do to get the most out of your visit?

   Answers will vary. (5-10 points)

9. If you were a legislator, what job would you like to have (Majority Leader, committee chairperson, etc.); why would you be well-suited; and what would you want to accomplish?

   Answers will vary. (10-20 points)

10. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of our legislative system in Montana?

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TEST KEY

Multiple Choice

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Fill In the Blanks

41. A proposed change, addition, or deletion to a bill is called a/an *amendment*.

42. A group of legislators with a common interest is a/an *caucus*.

43. After second reading, putting the bill in final form, with all amendments, is called *engrossment*.

44. After passing both houses, reproducing the bill in final form is called *enrollment*.

45. To present evidence for or against a bill at a hearing is to *testify*.

46. The method by which people or groups with special concerns, needs, or opinions try to persuade legislators to support their policies is called *lobbying*.

47. Two sources you can check to see which bills will be considered by each chamber during the day's business are

the electronic billboard

48. and *the Daily Agenda from the information booth*.

49. Copies of bills and "Status Sheets" can be purchased in the

Capitol's *basement mail room*.

50. The figure on the top of the Capitol Dome is called

Lady Liberty or Liberty.

Essay Questions

(The teacher may choose from the following.)

1. Describe the Capitol, its history, its decor, what impresses you about it, the statues and paintings, its floor plan, or any aspects that you would like to report.

2. Trace the steps that a bill takes in becoming a law.

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